

ME 14-67



USAID | MOROCCO

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REQUEST FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY DATA:

Program/Activity Number: TBD
Country/Region: Morocco/ANE
Program/Activity Title: Civic Participation in Governance

Funding Begin: FY2014 Funding End: FY2018 LOP Amount: \$33.9 million
IEE Prepared By: Andrew Colburn Current Date: 1/20/2014

IEE Amendment (Y/N): N

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION RECOMMENDED:

Categorical Exclusion: X Negative Determination: _____
Positive Determination: _____ Deferral: _____

ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS:

CONDITIONS _____ PVO/NGO: _____

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

Categorical Exclusion is recommended for all activities to be implemented under the *Civic Participation in Governance Project*, which will not have a negative effect on the natural or physical environment, pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2(c)(1)(i). In addition, 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(iii) and 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(xiv) state that an IEE is not required when the funded activity falls under the following classes of action: "Education, technical assistance, or training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.)" and "Studies, projects or programs intended to develop the capability of recipient countries to engage in development planning, except to the extent designed to result in activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.)".

The activities by their nature, scope, and scale are not likely to result in any significant adverse impact on the environment. Thus, no Initial Environmental Examination or Environmental Assessment is likely to be needed. No potential adverse environmental impacts have been identified under this project.

Based on the information presented above, it is recommended that all activities under this project be categorically excluded.

APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION RECOMMENDED:

CLEARANCE:

Acting Mission Director: 
Tamika Cameron

Date: 2/24/14

CONCURRENCE:

Bureau Environmental Officer: 
John Wilson

Date: 3/7/14

Filename: _____ (USAID/ME BEO)

CC: Project Files, MEO tracking and OAA

ADDITIONAL CLEARANCES:

Project Manager:


Andrew Colburn

Date:

2/24/2014

Program Officer:


Clinton Doggett

Date:

2/24/2014

Mission Environmental Officer:


Fatine Bellamine

Date:

2/24/2014

Regional Environmental Advisor
Middle East :

cleared by e-mail
Alexandra M. Hadzi-Vidanovic
(see attached)

Date:

03-03-2014

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1.0 BACKGROUND AND ACTIVITY/PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1.1 Purpose and Scope of RCE

The purpose of this Request for Categorical Exclusion (RCE), in accordance with 22CFR216, is to provide the first review of the reasonably foreseeable effects on the environment, as well as recommended Threshold Decisions, for the following project: *Civic Participation in Governance*. This RCE provides a brief overview of the factual basis for a Threshold Decision as to whether an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement are required for the activities managed under this project.

Background

The Civic Participation in Governance (CPG) project will build on the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) recently negotiated with the Government of Morocco (GOM). It is premised on the hypothesis that increased public participation in shaping public policies will advance Moroccan initiatives for peaceful reform at the CDCS level. Change will result from strengthening CSOs and their advocacy networks, and helping the government and Moroccan CSOs to shape a positive enabling environment will result in greater civil society contribution to the public policy process. The project will address three continuing constraints to greater popular participation in the formulation and implementation of public policy in Morocco:

1. Limited civil society organization capacity to engage the political process;
2. Underdeveloped and unresponsive political parties; and
3. Marginalized youth and women.

Description of Activities

To achieve the Development Objective, "Increased Civic Participation in Governance," USAID has identified two intermediate results (IRs) and a cross-cutting objective of countering violent extremism (CVE). IR 2.1, "More Responsive and Representative Political Parties," will address systemic failings that have long limited the capacities of individual political parties and the overall relevance and effectiveness of Morocco's political system through a series of inter-related initiatives that engage parties, civil society organizations, elected leaders and citizens. IR 2.2, "Civil Society Contribution to Public Policy Increased," will build the management and organizational capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs) while increasing their technical abilities for more focused and effective advocacy and governance oversight. And the CVE component will address challenges in countering disaffection among youth, with particular focus on socioeconomic and political drivers.

IR 2.1: More Responsive and Representative Political Parties

Under IR 2.1, USAID will conduct strategic planning sessions with each partner party to develop an individualized plan and approach for future activities. This individualized support will continue through the duration of the project as parties participate in local elections (expected in 2015) and Parliamentary Elections (expected in 2016). Based on strategic priorities of the parties and input from an oversight committee composed of political parties and civil society, technical assistance and training could include:

- Communication outreach strategies through branch offices, public meetings and meaningful press events;
- Development of issue-based policies and platforms with the use of opinion research and policy working groups with civil society input;
- Local level party skills building;
- Regional party coordinator workshops;
- Party branch development and capacity building.
- Coalition building workshops and confidence building exercises;
- Support for spaces for dialogue between political parties and citizens (marginalized youth in particular); and
- Public outreach campaigns/civic education on the importance of participation in the political process and the roles of political parties.

Additionally under IR 2.1 the project will help the GOM improve the electoral framework and legislation which effects the environment for political participation. Support will also be provided to GOM entities mandated to develop or implement electoral laws as well as political parties and CSOs for advocating improvements for such legislation. The project will also help CSOs and political parties oversee the implementation of electoral laws through partisan and independent election observation missions.

IR 2.2: Civil Society Contribution to Public Policy Increased

Under IR 2.2, USAID will identify one or more intermediate support organizations (ISOs) to help improve the core management, fundraising, staffing technical skills of Moroccan CSOs who are actively seeking to influence public policy making and implementation; help the GOM work advance planned civil society-related constitution reforms, organic laws, policies that facilitate greater participation of civil society in advocacy and oversight of governance; and, working initially through the ISOs, help CSOs develop advocacy capabilities (including the ability to form coalitions), strengthen constituent relations, develop research capabilities, and utilize information communications technology to help shape and oversee the implementation of public policies. Illustrative activities include:

- Technical Assistance Organization providing training and assistance to increase the capacity of ISOs to deliver technical assistance to CSOs;
- TAO providing sub-grants (with USAID approval) and/or technical assistance to Moroccan CSOs for advocacy or government oversight/watch-dog initiatives; and
- Training/technical assistance or direct financial support to GOM to develop systems for civic participation in governance.

Cross-Cutting Objective: Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)

The project will include a number of activities which build on and expand current activities that foster a culture of civic participation through greater engagement of at-risk youth through their communities in marginalized regions susceptible to violent extremist activities. This includes a program which that offers socio-economic opportunities to at-risk youth in Tangiers and Tetouan as well as a program giving youth a voice in their local governments through youth councils. The CPG project will greatly expand current activities and strengthen the linkages between youth and the CSOs and governmental systems working to support them. In parallel, the first year of the project envisions the development of a community policing program with the goal of instilling trust between marginalized youth and local police. As well as a direct assistance program to extend to minors in the local prisons of Tangier and Tetouan. Assuming success, this program will be scaled up and expanded to reach additional young detainees in other urban prisons. Illustrative activities include:

- Training for marginalized youth in life skills and vocational and employability;
- Technical assistance/training to youth service providing CSOs;
- Development of youth councils in marginalized areas advocating for the needs of at-risk youth in governance: and

- Development of mechanisms which increase trust and collaborative relationships between police and their communities in marginalized areas.

2.0 EVALUATION OF PROJECT/PROGRAM ISSUES WITH RESPECT TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT POTENTIAL

These activities by their nature, scope, and scale are not likely to result in any significant adverse impact on the environment. Thus, no Initial Environmental Examination or Environmental Assessment is likely to be needed. No potential adverse environmental impacts have been identified under this project.

3.0 RECOMMENDED THRESHOLD DECISIONS & MITIGATION ACTIONS (INCLUDING MONITORING AND EVALUATION)

Categorical Exclusion is recommended for all activities to be implemented under the *Civic Participation in Governance* project which will not have a negative effect on the natural or physical environment, pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2(c)(1)(i). In addition, 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(iii) and 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(xiv) state that an IEE is not required when the funded activity falls under the following classes of action: “*Education, technical assistance, or training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.)*” and “*Studies, projects or programs intended to develop the capability of recipient countries to engage in development planning, except to the extent designed to result in activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.)*”.

All activities under the *Civic Participation in Governance* project can be categorized as technical assistance and/or training programs. Based on the above, all activities under the *Civic Participation in Governance Project* should be considered for categorical exclusion per 22 CFR 216.2(c)(1)(i), 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(iii), and 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(xiv).

The activities by their nature, scope, and scale are not likely to result in any significant adverse impact on the environment. Thus, no Initial Environmental Examination or Environmental Assessment is likely to be needed. No potential adverse environmental impacts have been identified under this project.

The following table summarizes the type of activities under the *Civic Participation in Governance Project* and their corresponding recommended threshold decisions:

Activity	Expected Threshold Decision
IR 2.1: Cooperative agreement with Consortium for Electoral and Political Processes (CEPPS) to increase political party engagement with citizens, both through party structures and civil society, improve the ability of political parties to develop and implement policies that meet citizen needs and expectations, strengthen the ability of women and youth to play meaningful and active roles in political parties, and improved electoral framework and oversight of elections.	Categorical Exclusion per 22CFR216.2(c)(2)(i)
IR 2.2: Grant under Global Civil Society Strengthening leader with associates award to strengthen the organizational capacity of selected Moroccan CSOs, provide technical assistance for intermediate support organizations for civil society, help GOM to include meaningful civil society participation in developing public policy, and ensure that Moroccan CSO advocacy and governance oversight capabilities become more effective.	Categorical Exclusion per 22CFR216.2(c)(2)(i)
IR 2.2: Direct grants to Moroccan CSOs for the development of intermediate support organizations.	Categorical Exclusion per 22CFR216.2(c)(2)(i)
IR 2.2: Direct small grants to Moroccan CSOs for governance advocacy or oversight projects.	Categorical Exclusion per 22CFR216.2(c)(2)(i)
IR 2.2: Direct (G2G) financial support to GOM initiatives that improve civic participation in governance.	Categorical Exclusion per 22CFR216.2(c)(2)(i)

Activity	Expected Threshold Decision
CVE: Cooperative agreement increasing constructive civic engagement and leadership of at-risk youth in their communities.	Categorical Exclusion per 22CFR216.2(c)(2)(i)
CVE: PIO grant (a) increasing capacities of associations that provide opportunities for youth to engage economically, educationally, and socially in their communities; and (b) increasing social and economic inclusion of at-risk youth in targeted regions through delivery of education, life skills, workforce opportunities, and other youth-friendly services	Categorical Exclusion per 22CFR216.2(c)(2)(i)
CVE: Contract through IQC for a community policing activity that increases trust and collaborative relationships between at-risk youth, their communities and law enforcement.	Categorical Exclusion per 22CFR216.2(c)(2)(i)
CVE: Possible direct (G2G) financial support to GOM initiatives that mitigate the drivers of extremism for marginalized youth.	Categorical Exclusion per 22CFR216.2(c)(2)(i)

4.0 REVISIONS:

Pursuant to 22CFR216.3(a)(9), if new information becomes available which indicates that activities to be funded by the project might be "major" and the project's effect "significant," this categorical exclusion will be reviewed and revised by the originator of the project and submitted to the Bureau Environmental Officer for approval and, if appropriate, an environmental assessment will be prepared. It is the responsibility of the AOR to timely inform the MEO and BEO of any changes in the scope and nature of the approved activities, which may warrant the revision of the approved Threshold Decision.